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The
NORTHERN ILLINOIS
STATE NORMAL SCHOOL
QUARTERLY

THE NEW PROFESSION



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DE KALB, ILLINOIS

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BACCALAUREATE ADDRESS

by

PRESIDENT JOHN W. COOK



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BACCALAUREATE ADDRESS

The Northern Illinois State Normal School will soon complete the eighteenth year of its service to the State. I have thought it not inappropriate, therefore, that I should take this occasion to indicate in a brief way some of the ideas that are clearly articulated in the minds of those who are responsible for its policies and management. Since its sole purpose is the preparation of teachers for the schools of Illinois, and since it came into being because of the belief that teaching is an art which should rest upon a scientific basis, I have selected as the theme of the occasion, **THE NEW PROFESSION.**

For many centuries there were but three learned professions, the ministry, law, and medicine. These were regarded as so essential to the preservation of society that the early universities were organized for their equipment. The first university, a by-product of the crusades, gave itself to the last of the three; the second, because of the struggle of the free cities of Italy to maintain their rights against the grasping disposition of the crown, to the law; the third, because the control of society was being rapidly transferred from the priest to the doctor of philosophy. It is only within comparatively recent decades that teaching, the oldest of the human arts, began to receive any serious consideration as a science and consequently as a profession. The first Normal School in America was opened in the early autumn of 1839 and its first student body consisted of three young women. It is true that Germany had been less reluctant to consider the teacher as worthy of professional recognition, and certain of the Catholic Teaching Congregations had felt the necessity of carefully training those who were to instruct the young of their communion; but, otherwise, the professional school for teachers lagged along until well into the last half of the nineteenth century, before it really caught the interested attention of the people. Illinois led the movement in the Mississippi Valley with her Illinois State Normal University, in 1857. Twelve years later a second school was added and in 1895 there was a successful issue of the propaganda that had been started by the Northern Illinois State Teachers' Association and that was really brought to a matter of buildings and grounds through the powerful reenforcement rendered by a group of DeKalb business men.

Today every state in the American Union has at least one of these institutions and some of them a full dozen, while every civilized people in the round world recognizes their necessity and would as soon think of relinquishing their medical and theological schools as their schools for teachers.

The slow development of these schools has been due in no small part to at least three deterrent causes; to the idea that he who knows a subject can teach it; to the somewhat popular idea that teachers, like poets, are born and not made; to the very palpable fact that good Normal Schools cost something. The first of these ideas has enough of truth in it to make it worth considering. It took some time to show by an unfortunate experience, that was too costly to suffer continuance, that mere knowledge of a subject is no sort of guaranty that it will be well taught. Some of the most notable of experts are the most wretched of teachers of the subjects in which their knowledge has become standard authority. It is admitted as a matter of course and insisted upon universally that one cannot hope to teach what he does not know, but it is also as strenuously urged that there is another knowledge that must be added in order that skill of the requisite sort shall be forthcoming. It is the function of the Normal School to furnish that supplementary knowledge and base upon it indispensable deftness of a superior sort. As to the second contention it must be admitted that it has weight. But it has no more weight with regard to teaching than with any of the other professions of the modern world. The assertion means that he who is by nature adapted to a calling will be far more likely to succeed at it than if the opposite were true. We have plenty of illustrations of the square peg in the round hole, but I have never heard the most strenuous advocate of the doctrine declare his willingness to submit his chances for life, when assaulted by a serious malady, to a "born" doctor. As to the third proposition its truth is admitted without discussion. It is not a question as to whether a thing costs something or not but as to whether the expenditure for which it calls is in the interests of true economy. The popularity of the modern Normal School is a clear demonstration of the truth of the proposition that this expenditure is so regarded.

The permanence of the institution having been assured it is entirely legitimate to ask for a show of its contentions. What

does it regard as essential qualifications of the teacher and how does it propose to contribute to their embodiment? This contention can best be answered by a definition of that which is the end of all institutions of this general character.

For the purpose of this discussion education must be regarded from two points of view. From the standpoint of the teacher, it is the conscious influence of one mind upon another, for the purpose of inducing certain activities on the part of the other that he would not otherwise perform and that will result in the organization of a type of character that is defined to the thought of the teacher and that is regarded as most desirable in the civilization that is thrusting its problems upon us. From the standpoint of the pupil, education is a process of conforming the activities of life to those employments that will achieve the results that are implicit in the teacher's ideal.

With this idea of education in mind it is not difficult to discover what should be the fundamental characteristic of all those who assume to claim for themselves the title of teacher. A teacher is first and foremost and essentially an "influencer." If this indispensable quality be lacking success is impossible of realization. If there are those here who are called upon to act in behalf of the public as employers of teachers I trust this suggestion will be taken to heart. If a teacher cannot awaken in his pupil an earnest desire, an irresistible impulse, to reproduce the message of the master it will be far better for all concerned that he should seek distinction in some calling where the gates are not closed and locked against him.

I have heard many attempts to analyze this desirable endowment and to trace its witchery to its source. Although all of us invariably feel its potency when we come within the sphere of its energy, it is by no means an easy task to name its elements. It is here perhaps that what may be called native gifts are most manifest. When the "born" leader appears we joyfully hasten to confess our allegiance and enlist as his followers. It should not be forgotten that leadership is a quality that is capable of cultivation, however. No cause seems able to make a notable winning in the absence of a personal leader who possesses this ability to create enthusiasm for his cause, and this is particularly true of the teacher's propaganda. All great teachers have been great leaders and

it was this power of leadership that made the richest contribution to their success. There always will be leaders in a school and if the teacher is not equal to the demands of the situation the pupils see to it that the office shall not go begging. It may be said, in a general way, that it is the function of the Normal School to contribute to the original sources of influence large augmentations of power, but before considering them permit me to refer to two other conditions of especial importance that are not wholly within its sphere of control.

When one is no longer young he should be content to take a place on the side lines. Youth implies the possibility of change, which is but another name for educability. It is a biting sarcasm to set the unchangeable up as an aspiration to growth. Youth is open-eyed, adventurous, fearless, ready for high emprise. Only tragical situations are possible when it is to look to its own opposite for its stimulation.

I am well aware that youth is not altogether a matter of years. Those who have lived but a few decades sometimes seem to suggest remote aeons. A few years ago a distinguished man declared that a man is practically "set" at thirty-five, or thereabout, and that if change is looked for thereafter there will be only disappointment. He suggested that mild extinction with the kindly anaesthetic would not rob the world of much of anything of value and would make room for the on-coming people of power and expanding growth. I have been disposed to object to thirty-five but to be willing to compromise on forty. But, as I have suggested, forty is not a matter of the calendar. It is, instead, the hour of high-tide, the high-water mark, whether it be attained forty years after birth or at any other period. And the vital question that remains is not as to how far beyond that boundary line the individual may have lived but as to whether he has actually remained within the zone of growth. The one thing that is absolutely essential is the spirit that is characteristic of youth, whether it have its materialization in a body that has been in service two score years or four score years. The wonder-spirit, the feeling of admiration, the enthusiasm that answers back to the call of the world, the eyes that follow the bird in its flight and that glow with the light that never was on land

or sea in the presence of the new revelation of a blade of grass or of an opening flower or of the heart of a child—this is the essential thing and not the record in the family Bible.

As for the second, I do not need to search long. Perhaps it is implicit in the thought of youth. It is the quality that we call beauty. If you are not beautiful, I beg of you pass on to the next door instead of entering here. Beauty is a quality of universal appreciation. While there is a variety of opinion as to the standards there is no variability as to its desirableness. With what enjoyment the mind contemplates that which its judgment declares beautiful. How all of the hateful passions submit themselves to its sovereignty and subdue their lawlessness in its presence. Is this a hard gospel? Let me hasten to correct your inference and thus allay your solicitude. While physical beauty is a gracious gift and never to be despised, there are other forms that far outshine it in the production of the permanent aesthetic effect. All of those efforts at personal decoration that we instinctively seek for the enhancing of attractiveness are indications of the high tribute that we instinctively pay to it but it is quite possible to be very beautiful, even though the features may modestly ignore the Greek formula of proportion. In beauty there is an impression of inner harmony, of permanent and abiding poise, of fitness and that which leaves the mind at peace. Our young friends have long since learned that the manifestations of mind may be classified under the will and the intellect and the feelings. If they have not also learned that the highest realms in which these powers are capable of exercise are the world of the Good for the will; the world of the True for the intellect; and the world of the Beautiful for the emotional nature, they may do so now. The psychology to which their attention has been directed also holds that all real personality consists in the unity of will, intellect, and the emotions, and that all of life is not played a part of the time on one string and then on another, but that it is an orchestral effect that is always produced. Now let them add to their previous knowledge the great truth that the Good, the True and the Beautiful are similarly related and that instead of three strands that are side by side there are three inseparable aspects of one marvelous whole. No will is true to itself that does not work out the Good; no intellect is true to itself that does not seek the

True; no emotions are true to themselves that do not seek their gratification in the realm of the Beautiful. And, further, and here is the summation and revelation of the whole matter, there is no Good that is not at the same time true and beautiful, nor True that is not good and beautiful, nor Beautiful that is not good and true.

In the light of these simple but all comprehensive truths it is easy to see that our common error of estimation of the beautiful lies in our failure to see the whole sweep of these principles. No one can be beautiful who is not at the same time in harmony with the good and the true and it is often the case that those who seem lacking in a marked degree in those elements that are often regarded as the last words of beauty are to us supremely beautiful. One of the most beautiful women that I have known was a hunchback. It seemed as if some cruel and malicious sprite had determined to exercise his devilish ingenuity in making her poor body uncouth and repulsive. He missed her serene face and majestic head and unconquerable spirit. Out of her seeming misfortune she lifted herself to so exquisite a womanhood that her life always seemed like the triumphal march of a conqueror with his captives at the wheels of his chariot. Mature men and women, with the white flowers on their brows, thank God that they were the pupils of Mary Fuller. We can all have the beauty of service and unselfishness and love and sincerity. I recall how years ago I spoke to our own Mrs. McMurry, of the charming appearance of one of our students and ventured the remark that she ought to make an extremely attractive and successful teacher. "She will never make a teacher," was her instant reply. I was utterly unprepared for the unfavorable judgment and begged an explanation. It was brief but conclusive—"She is selfish."

It is of course obvious that thus far we have approached only the threshold of the profession of teaching. The qualifications that I have indicated promise success when supplemented by a technical training of a suitable character. One might have them all and still fall far short of the requisite knowledge and skill to be entitled to the designation of one who is professionally prepared. I must therefore beg your indulgence while I endeavor, with such brevity as is possible, to indicate a few of the large, outstanding requirements of the situation. It is, of course, beyond my present purpose to dis-

cuss any part of the minutiae of the technic of the class room in which the successful teacher is an expert.

First of all, the absolute limits of the teacher must be recognized. I have characterized him as an "influencer," but it is obvious that he cannot induce activities of which the pupil is incapable. In a strict sense no one of these young men and women can educate anybody. I have had a long experience in the school room but in the sense in which I am now using the term I never educated any of the thousands who have been so gracious as to permit me to experiment with them. I trust that I have been of some assistance to many of them in the process of their self-education. The good mother supplies the food for the children but her eating it will not nourish them. The teacher of athletics prescribes the exercise for the pupils but her going through them will be of no value to them except as an illustration of what they are to do.

You will thus see the limitations of the teacher at his best. On one side it is possible for him to manifest tremendous power; on the other, he is as helpless as a babe. It is here that the contention of those who have so large a view of the force of heredity exhibits its validity. It is from the same position that the weakness of the teacher is made manifest. He frankly confesses it and realizes at the same time that the whole matter lies outside his sphere of influence through no fault of his own. He thankfully recognizes the wisdom of those children who chose good parents as he deplores the folly of those who did otherwise. When parents are disposed to find fault with the teachers of their children it may be wise for them to bestow some attention upon the family history. It may furnish material that will lead them to allay their critical spirits "with some cold drops of modesty." And although all concede that heredity must always be recognized as a potent factor in the formation or existence of character the teacher must not attempt to attribute his failure unduly to ancestors that may have belonged to a remote past.

It is because of considerations of this character that two schools of thinkers have arisen. One class regards "strong" teachers with suspicion, fearing that they will invade the sacred individuality of the child, that should be regarded as an inviolable inheritance. The extreme partisans in this group are disposed to follow his lead with humility and to

obey the dictations of his natural inclinations. The second class makes the teacher the practical determiner of the character of the child through the influences that he brings to bear upon him. It is probably true that the truth lies, as usual, between the extremes. Whether the child's "individuality" is a sacred thing or not depends upon its character. May it not be possible that his greatest need is a suppression of his native individuality and the substitution of a better one? All are obliged to admit that there are poor teachers and there are good teachers and the main difference lies in the fact that poor teachers are a negligible element in the life of the child, or an evil influence, and good teachers have a most telling effect in the determination of character. It was said of Thomas Arnold, the greatest headmaster of Rugby, that his boys could always be recognized in the military, civic and social life of England. Wherever they went they showed by their conduct the source from which they had drawn their inspiration. That he tremendously influenced them there could be no doubt. That his influence was always for their good was the concurrent testimony of the boys themselves and of all who followed their careers. Let it be understood that those of us who are working here have the unchangeable conviction that an urgent need of the present time and of all time is a body of positive, energetic, influential men and women in the schools, to the end that we may have, as their product, in the midst of our social life and constituting the bone and sinew of our citizenship, a body of positive, energetic, influential men and women.

If I were to ask you who are assembled here tonight as to the distinct aim of education, what would be your reply? Is there any such agreement of opinion among our people as to be assured of harmonious answers? We expend many millions annually in the support of our schools. The investment in the various plants reaches a stupendous aggregate. Attendance upon their sessions absorbs more than one-fourth of the length of the average life. The question recurs, have we a definite national ideal to be realized? Ancient Sparta, like modern Germany, was a military camp, her supreme effort being devoted to the production of the soldier. Ancient Athens, the first nation in all the long annals of time to exhibit a passion for individualism, endeavored through education to find a basis for social order in the very thing that seemed to

resent social control. Its aim was also definite. As it reacted violently against external control it set up as its ideal the man who could live by his own reason. The Roman, like the Spartan, subordinated the individual to the authority of the state, but in a very different way. The latter accomplished his aim by the severest and most exacting discipline; the former effected this unity of the individual and the state through his own free will. And that is a stupendous difference and a most remarkable advance. The educational system of the Roman, before it was corrupted by the Greek idea, aimed above all things to produce the man whose passionate desire was to yield himself to the service of the state. With the advent of Christianity the aim radically changed. The principle of other-worldliness became the dominating energy for centuries and men thought only of getting ready for heaven. As the world became an increasingly comfortable place of residence this conception lost its influence and was succeeded by efforts to improve material conditions and to reduce the disorderly elements to such a state of obedience to authority as would allow other occupations than that of the soldier to develop and become permanent. What is wanted in the state is put into the child and wherever the people have known what they needed most the educational ideal has defined itself and set up clear aims for the school.

Again I ask, what is the American ideal that constitutes the American aim of education? We have chosen democracy, with all of its fateful implications, as our form of government, and, with a sublime optimism, are trusting our precious inheritance of freedom to the intelligence and disposition of the masses. Modern government is an increasingly difficult art. We are not even giving to these whom we select to administer our affairs a technical preparation. A new congress will be elected next year. Where are the experts that are waiting our suffrage? Monarchy has its advantage in that its governing body persists and thus may be assumed to have at least a continuity of governmental experience. Heretofore our problems were relatively simple as we were not in close and immediate competition with the rest of mankind. That isolation, so admired by Washington, is a thing of the past. We are in the great market place of the world where the experts are our competitors. All that training can do for the ablest minds

is achieved by other nations. The most discriminating selection is exercised in the choice of men. With a boundless confidence in the superiority of the American mind and in our loosely articulated form of government we indifferently await the hazard of the future. Is it not high time that this boundless capacity in which we so confidently trust should set itself to the high problems of that inevitable future? I unhesitatingly assert that the problem of all problems, the one that towers above all others as mountain peaks tower above the plains and lift their summits to the drifting clouds, is the production of a citizenship that realizes the place of this nation in the modern world and that is equipped to meet its tremendous obligation. In consequence, every agency that has as its office the elaboration of means for the education of the people becomes at once of the greatest dignity and significance. When I pass through a county town I always look for the court house because it is to me the symbol of justice, the only means by which the differences among men can be permanently adjusted. My mind is sobered by the reflections that arise in its contemplation. I am always on the lookout for the school, because it is the nursery of states. I am thankful to those who have left their shades undrawn, as I walk along the streets in the evening, for they allow me to look into the sanctuary of the home where the sources of national life are revealed. I love the spires of the churches as they point toward the heights, with their uplifting suggestiveness. If I am responsive to these appeals, what must be my answer to the vision of the Normal School towers that rise above the Tudor battlements? They mark the place not only of a school but of an institution whose high office is to determine the character of hundreds of schools. As these schools shall be, so, in large part, will the homes be, so will the ideals of justice be, so will the church find an appreciation of its genius and its mission. You will confess, if you believe me to speak truly, that the Normal School, at least in the minds of those who are responsible for its policies, is more than a castle on the hill with its graceful campus and curving drives. Clearly, it should know at what to direct its energies. Certainly it should be ready to proclaim its supreme aim as an educational auxiliary in the determination of our national life.

Its office is the preparation of teachers. But in what shall their preparation consist?

First of all they should have a clear appreciation of the meaning of our national life. What is the genius of our institutions? What is the idea at the heart of things? If we penetrate to the center of what is characteristic here and that has developed inevitably as the logic of the situation what shall we find? If that can be discovered we shall be well on the way to the determination of an ideal.

I believe that I may truthfully claim to have read every address that Abraham Lincoln ever made that has found its place in the books of our time. Doubtless he made many addresses when there was no reporter present to make them a part of the literature of his age and of the permanent record of his life. It is said that as a lawyer he was always interesting, however inconsequential the case in which he may have been employed. His public speeches convince me that he was dominated by a single idea. There are single ideas, however, that are all-encompassing enough to afford the amplest room for the exercise of the noblest mind. The idea that had for him such an irresistible fascination was of such a character. During the less than a score of years in which he may be accounted to have been a man of real public significance it was up for discussion. It was conspicuously in the foreground or lurking in the background of every move on our political chess board. Once up it could never be settled until it was settled right. The first sentence in the Declaration of Independence was the fundamental principle in the political creed of Abraham Lincoln. It is the principle upon which our nation is professedly founded. It is the most important political principle ever uttered. It has seized the imagination of the race and has fired it with an inextinguishable flame. It is a principle that should stand at the front of the teacher's mind and that he should cordially accept and to which he should render his unswerving allegiance, for out of it proceed those corollaries which constitute the administrative guides in governmental policies. It was this that was the theme of the Lincoln addresses when he turned aside from the practice of law to instruct the public mind. This was the theme of the historic debates and the Cooper Institute address and should

be the fundamental doctrine in the educational creed of every teacher of the children in our great democracy.

It is this conception of equality that lifts every child into the lime light. I have heard it ridiculed. "How absurd," it is sometimes said, "to claim equality where differences are so conspicuously present." No one knows better than the teacher that intellectual differences are so strongly marked that all grading is imperfectly attainable. The moral differences are almost as strongly marked. The social differences among the people are the cause of a perpetual outcry against what seems to be the grossest injustice somewhere. Why then talk about equality where there is no equality? The author of the Declaration was not thinking of intellectual, moral or social equality, nor were those who flung it in the face of a world that was given over to the doctrine of the divine right of kings. He and the others as well were thinking of equality of rights in the presence of the law of the land, of political rights, of religious rights. But it is as evident that all men are not created equal in these respects, for the vast majority of mankind are born to slavery and poverty and inequality. What, then, can it mean? It is the idealist's assertion as to the nature and destiny of man. It is the radiant corollary of the sublime proposition that Almighty God is no respecter of persons and cannot be if he is to fulfill the conditions of absolute justice. It is the defense of the founders of the republic for the establishment of a new nation on the earth. It is the fearless repudiation of all doctrines of caste and aristocracy and rights of wealth and privileges of the few and the hateful egotism of "I am better than thou because of some accident of birth or possession." Who dares to stand up in the face of the American nation and deny it? Am I not right, then, in declaring that the American teacher must be aflame with this burning truth if he is to cross the threshold of the American school?

With this conviction as a spring of action in the mind of the teacher there will be no social distinctions in the school. He who needs most will receive most and all will find in the life of the institution in which their characters are being shaped a clear, cordial, delightful exhibition of the great principle that seeks expression in the life of the state. The great founder of the Kindergarten was the first to attempt to make

of the child's school the perfect epitome of an ideal society on the American plan, although he did not know that it was the American plan. This may be characterized as the political aim of the school, but it is at the same time a moral aim. The curse of the great monarchies is the immorality of their fundamental conviction. To deny to men the rights that are theirs by the fact that they are men is a continual affront to the principle of eternal justice. As Lincoln declared that a nation could not continue to exist half slave and half free because of the wearing strain of a continual contradiction, so cruel autocracies cannot continue to exist against ever present tension between freedom and slavery, and in the tumult of the present we are witnesses of what is inevitable under such a regime. We see how foolish it was to suppose that when this conflict is on we can permit ourselves to stand as indifferent spectators on the side lines.

And as we turn to the intellectual task of the school what must be our ideal? I answer that it should be the fitting of our youth for the successful pursuit of truth and to win for it their unfaltering allegiance when once it is discovered. All other aims are subordinate when compared with this, for what has been considered is involved in it. To be satisfied with less is to be satisfied to be a mere creature of habit, to follow a prescribed method of life because others have followed it, to surrender reason as a determiner of conduct; in brief, to be unfitted for life in a democracy where the fate of society is forever to rest upon the high intelligence of the individual units of citizenship. All details of organization and management, all subjects that make up the course of study, all motives that determine discipline should get their inspiration from this high purpose.

All that has been said or that may be said of the supreme value of truth is equally applicable to demonstrate the inexpressible folly of the false. There are few if any forms of vice that are not at core essentially denials of truth and attempts to substitute an appearance for a reality. It is our belief that the school carries with it a grave hazard in the numberless opportunities that it offers for deceptions and insincerities. The fact that one is a member of a school is an indication that he is still in the stage of possible change and that in consequence he has not yet taken permanent form. The low grade

of morality found in so many schools indicates the absence of any settled conviction regarding reality. Discovering, as it is quite inevitable that we should from time to time, unmistakable marks of weakness on the part of the individual, we should endeavor as an institution to disillusion the offender who in the stress of a moral struggle loses sight of the most obvious axioms of the world.

If, therefore, we covet as teachers to be great sources of influence we may find here the hiding place of power. What is it above all other things that makes for this coveted influence upon the lives of men? It must be something that goes from one to another and that finds a place for itself in the enginery that fashions society, that gives the distinguishing mark to the national genius, that determines whether the pages of history that tell the story of a peoples' contribution to civilization shall be a record of glory or of shame. You know well enough without my telling. It is the dominating idea that has seized the consciousness of a race that gives it its place in the hierarchy of states. And of all ideas there are no others so all-inclusive, so shaping, so coloring, so self-determining, as those that urge men to push into the meaning of life, the mystery of destiny, the system of things in which our lots are cast, of which we are a part, and which are to make us or break us according as we are wise or ignorant with regard to them, and according as we are willing to follow their revelations. One has no perplexing anxieties regarding life when he feels the substantial order of the universe under his feet. It was said of John Locke, the great English philosopher, who so marked the English mind by his contentions that it has made slight changes in its philosophy from his day to this, that his all-absorbing passion was a love of truth. Truth is but a revelation of things as they actually are and he who cares for nothing else as he cares for a knowledge of actual existence and who is always ready to surrender all preferences and sink all self-advantages in the presence of what commends itself to him as the truth, is under the spell of the noblest passion that can win the allegiance of the human mind.

In the light of these contentions the duty of the Normal School is lifted above all possibilities of ambiguity or compromise. As there can never be any other way of creating

a love of truth that is at all comparable with living the truth, its obligation is upon it.

The power of the mind that is especially employed in the pursuit of truth is the reason. The reason occupies itself with thinking. In the language of a great educational philosopher, "The fostering of the sense of truth from the earliest years up is the surest way of leading the pupil to gain the power of thinking. The unprejudiced, disinterested yielding to truth as well as the effort to shun all deception and false seeming is of the greatest value in strengthening the power of reflection, as this considers nothing of value but the actually existing objective interaction of things and events." Let no one pride himself on his thought power who does not recognize this penetrating truth.

Here is the field in which the technic of instruction and the whole round of class room management is to find its inspiration. There is a fine art that may be mastered for leading the young to practice this art. The founder of modern scientific method was its earliest revealer. The educational reformers from his day to this have been striving to develop it. Even though the field of religion shall remain closed to the school, the open-mindedness at which the school should aim will be its most efficient ally. The Sunday schools should be the most diligent students of the methods of the technical school in order that their teaching shall reach the highest attainable point of efficiency.

Do we exaggerate our importance when we claim for our institution a place of large opportunity? Do we overvalue the contribution we shall make if we live up to our ideals?

Fifty-two years ago this Sabbath evening, I, like these expectant friends, was standing on the threshold of Commencement Week. The years that I had spent in the institution from which I was about to graduate had not only been especially eventful for me, because of the shaping influences that had come into my life, but they had been of immense historic significance and, in consequence, of the profoundest import to the entire world. It had been my inestimable privilege to stand by the side of the nation's great highway and see immortal pageants sweep by. Humanity seemed stepping on far and fast toward the accomplishment of such achievements as belong alone to the land of dreams. The sullen roar of can-

nons had died away. The great camps had lost their tents. The final, triumphant parade had marched itself through the splendid avenue of the nation's capital, and the men, as if by the touch of the harlequin's wand, had been transformed from the soldier to the citizen, from representatives of the angry god of war to the happy followers of the smiling and benignant goddess of peace.

Our hearts were inexpressibly buoyant. Slavery was gone forever. The bar sinister was erased from our escutcheons. The old and hateful wall of separation between the North and the South was at last broken down. Ancient prejudices were on the way to final extinction and there arose before the imagination the enrapturing vision of a united people, whose only rivalry should be in the service of a common country.

In the more than half a century that has gone since that happy June day of eighteen hundred sixty-five, practically all of those fond anticipations have been realized. The nation has advanced in material prosperity with leaps and bounds. Invention, the most cunning of all magicians, has multiplied the power of man beyond our wildest dreams. The general diffusion of knowledge has lifted the standard of intelligence far beyond what then obtained. Nation after nation, convinced by our triumphant answer to the foes of what then seemed a doubtful experiment, has joined the ranks of democracy and now swells the mighty chorus that declares the only form of government possible for the future to be that which is based upon the consent and free participation of the governed.

How different the pitiful scene that confronts you, my young and aspiring friends, on this day toward which you have looked with such pleasurable anticipations! The car of progress is arrested in its onward movement. Notwithstanding all that has come to pass to cheer the hearts of the lovers of mankind, one hideous and malignant relic of a barbaric past has remained intrenched in its impregnable stronghold in the heart of Europe. Beneath its sometime glove of silk has always lurked the cold and relentless mail of steel. When it has affected to devote itself most assiduously to the arts of peace its deeper purpose has been to accumulate resources for the more efficient prosecution of a destructive war. Drunk with its dream of universal domination through the potency

of the sword, it has with set and persistent purpose developed an oligarchy that has seized the reins of absolute power and that is hurling the common people of the empire against a nation at whose throat it sprang with the ferocity of a tiger launching its sinuous and sleek body like a catapult upon an unexpecting victim. With what boundless egotism it identifies its ravaging campaigns with divine purposes in the management of the world! With what incomparable insolence it legalizes its nameless, shameless barbarities upon helpless children and shrieking women and dares to defend itself in the name of Almighty God. It has remained for the ages to witness as the saddest spectacle in the frightful tragedies of time an exhibition of the obliteration of human compassion, the absolute throwing to the winds of that remnant of human spirit that is the final, presumable, distinguishing quality that separates man and beast.

Within a short period certain portions of our state have been visited by the scourging demons of the air. The serene balance of nature has been lost and in the wild tumult of a disordered world the frail structures that man has reared for his shelter have collapsed like a house of cards. This strange and interesting boon of life has been snatched from its possessor as if by an elfish and capricious sprite in the gratification of its fantastic malice. We know the resistless energy of the storm. We set our ingenuity against its gigantic savagery. We rescue the broken bodies of our dead from the wreckage of our homes and have no vision of a sneering demon's hellish glee. But when we witness the reversion of men to a condition as empty of regret and shame as the temper of the blind forces of nature, all preconceptions, all convictions, all axioms relating to civilizations go sweeping away like the twisting, staggering thing that drops out of a tortured sky and that uproots everything in its fateful path.

What does all this mean to us who are gathered here tonight? This is an unparalleled experience. Here is a black and hideous reality that confronts us for the first time. In its presence all of the fine phrases with which we have entertained ourselves regarding the brotherhood of man seem but the idle vaporings of an over-wrought fancy. The urgent question that presses for reply is, what are we going to do about it? Are we to give way to the spirit of panic, like a

crazed and frantic Lear, in the wild war of the elements, or shall we collect our resources, recall our faith in the deeper and profounder realities than those that play upon the surface of things and, in the faith of an invincible manhood that will never yield its precious heritage of freedom, purge the world of its blighting pest and thus rescue for all the coming generations of men the blessing that has been our boast?

As we are soon to separate and as you are to go forth to your task of giving direction to human thought and vitality to human endeavor and a high seriousness to human purpose pledge yourselves to the task of the inculcation in the young of this noble conception of the equality of men because of their participation in the rights and dignities of manhood. Let those who receive your ministry go from your presence inspired with a quenchless love of truth and with a passion for its pursuit. In your memories of your life here remember us, if truthfully you may, as those to whom these conceptions are unspeakably precious and who are devoting their lives to the making of them, great energies in the shaping of the destiny of this precious land which is our love and our pride.

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